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Reagan Accused of Disrespecting Law

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SOUTH BEND, Ind., May 1—Walter F. Mondale today accused President Reagan of disrespect for the law and said he will make the president's conduct a central issue in the campaign.

"Sometimes I think this administration believes executing the laws means shooting them," Mondale said in a Law Day speech at the University of Notre Dame. "From the day the president entered office, he and his people have been reading selectively from the U.S. Code and picking and choosing the laws they wish to enforce."

Sounding like a candidate who has turned his attention from the race for the Democratic presidential nomination toward the Nov. 6 general election, Mondale said Reagan has failed four tests of leadership with respect to law and social justice.

"Today I serve notice on Mr. Reagan that I intend to make his lack of presidential leadership on matters of law and justice a fundamental issue

in this campaign," Mondale said to the audience of law students.

In his speech, Mondale detailed a long and familiar list of charges against the Reagan administration that he said demonstrate the president's failure to respect the law. Among them were the CIA's covert operations in Central America, the administration's rejection of World Court jurisdiction over U.S. actions in that region, the administration's opposition to denying tax breaks to segregated schools and what Mondale called a retreat on women's rights and civil rights and reduced enforcement of environmental and occupational-safety laws.

Mondale also attacked Reagan for running an administration in which numerous appointees have resigned or come under fire because of ethical and legal conflicts of interest.

"There's a long list of officials in this administration, from [former national security affairs adviser] Richard Allen to [U.S. Information Agency Director] Charles Wick, who are mired in conflicts . . .," he said.

Mondale indirectly referred to the

controversy over Reagan's nomination of Edwin Meese III to be attorney general by saying, "My appointee for attorney general . . . will not be subjected to allegations that he or she traded financial favors for government positions."

Mondale said Reagan has tried to avoid accountability. "In a range of ways, this administration has tried to neutralize public criticism and debate by drawing a curtain of silence between citizens and the government," he said.

He attacked the Reagan administration for trying to exempt the CIA from Freedom of Information Act requirements, for barring the news media from the invasion of Grenada and for seeking regulations "that might have required me" to have today's speech cleared by government censors.

Mondale ignored his two Democratic opponents during the speech, but in other appearances today in Indiana and Ohio he went after Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) for opposing the Chrysler Corp. bailout and domestic-content legislation.